

# THE BOSTON INFORMER

No. 69

For people who care about Boston

January–February 2005

## Residential Boom Downtown

Although it seems doubtful that Boston's population will ever return to its 1950s high, the City has been gaining in residents over the last 20 years. Boston's population peaked in 1950 at about 800,000, then declined to about 560,000 in 1980. Since 1980, the population has grown to about 582,000 in 2000. Developers are meeting the demand for housing, particularly in Central Boston, including the downtown and waterfront area previously dominated by office buildings.

On the downtown waterfront, where Harbor Towers (624 units) and Rows Wharf (100 units) have been for some time, 130 housing units at 500 Atlantic Ave. are being built around Central Artery vent building No. 3. Proposed renovation of Russia Wharf will include 50 units in the mixed-use project. Also close to the waterfront are 80 Broad St. (96 units under construction) and 99 Broad St. (office space converted to 48 units).

Other major new projects in Central Boston are 100 Cambridge St. (75 units), recently completed Tremont Tower (89 units), Emerson College's dormitory on Piano Row (540 beds) and One Charles (231 units). Several Cambridge Street projects will add about 24 units.

In the North End Waterfront area, major planned projects are Battery Wharf (104 units), Nashua Street Residences (368 units), 44 Prince St. (57 units), and Lovejoy Wharf (260 units).

In the West End, Equity Residential plans to expand Charles River Park by an additional 306 units.

For the residential Back Bay, proposed new projects include Columbus Center (451 units over the Mass. Turnpike); the YWCA Parlin Apartments will gain 113 units, most of which will be affordable; The Clarendon across the street (400 units); N.E. Power Co. Building at Stuart and Dartmouth streets (111 units); Virgin Records (54 units) and Mandarin Oriental Hotel (60 units).

Projects in the Chinatown area include Kensington Place (336 units), Liberty Place on Washington Street (398 units), the recently opened Metropolitan on Oak Street (250 units), Lafayette Lofts on Ave. de Lafayette (42 units) and Lincoln Plaza (85 units). Several other projects in Chinatown will add about 65 units.



Source: Millennium Partners-Boston

**One Charles at Park Plaza**—First proposed in 1988, this 231-unit, 17-story high-end condominium development faces the State Transportation Building garage entrance and has views of the Boston Common.

The recent proposal for development in South Cove (aka South Bay) off Kneeland Street called for approximately 1,700 units. As the market for offices remains depressed, more residential projects and conversion of existing office space to residential can be expected.



Source: Alax Partners

**Lovejoy Wharf**—A 260-unit development with ground-floor retail and 361 parking spaces is proposed for the Hoffman Building and 131 Beverly St. near North Station. The existing wharf will be improved for better pedestrian connections.

### Downtown Residential Projects

	Project	No. of Units
Waterfront	80 Broad St.	96
	99 Broad St.	48
	500 Atlantic Ave.	130
	Russia Wharf	50
Downtown	100 Cambridge St.	75
	Cambridge Street projects	24
	Emerson dormitory	540 beds
	Lafayette Lofts	42
	Lincoln Plaza	85
	One Charles	231
North End	Tremont Tower	89
	44 Prince St.	57
	Battery Wharf	104
	Lovejoy Wharf	260
	Nashua St. Residences	368
West End	Charles River Park	306
Back Bay	Columbus Center	451
	Mandarin Oriental Hotel	60
	N.E. Power Co. Bldg.	111
	The Clarendon	400
	Virgin Records	54
Chinatown & So. Cove	YWCA	113
	Beach St. & Harrison Ave. projects	68
	Kensington Place	336
	Liberty Place	398
	The Metropolitan	250
	South Cove (aka South Bay)	1,700



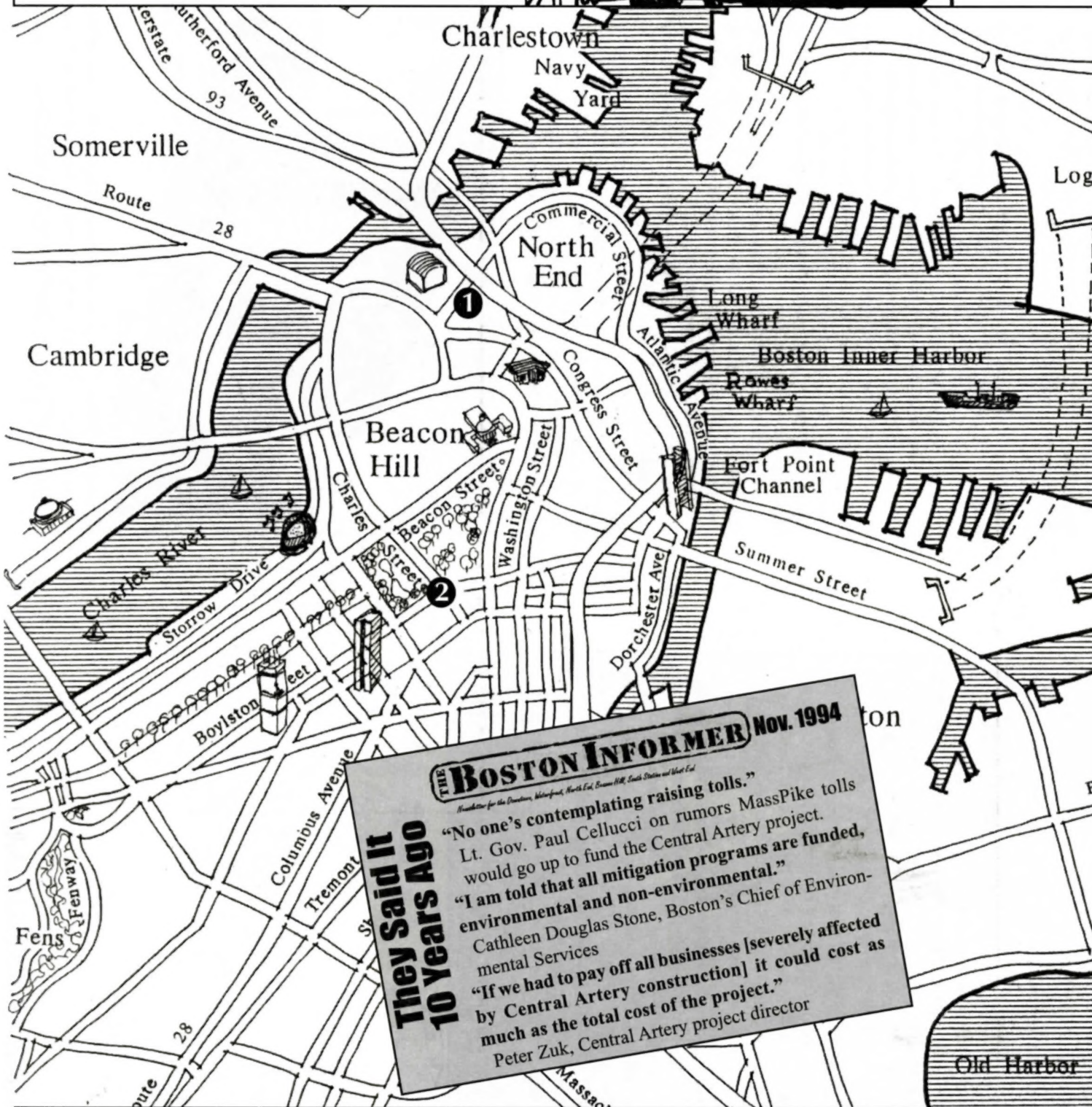
# Boston Informer Predictions for 2005!

- ◆ Bechtel/Parsons Brinckerhoff (B/PB) will sue MassPike over charges about Big Dig tunnel leaks for defamation of professional reputation and will win \$1 billion. MassPike will counter-sue B/PB over the tunnel leaks and then will award the tunnel-repair contract to B/PB.
- ◆ Making official the existing procedures, the BRA will abolish planning and zoning codes. Development will be approved at the discretion of the BRA director.
- ◆ The Boston Museum project, after bids to build on the Rose Kennedy Greenway were rejected twice, will finally find a home in the vast empty spaces of the South Boston Convention Center.
- ◆ To make room for the new 800-seat A380 Airbus airplane, Massport will rebuild the recently renovated International Terminal E.

- ◆ Mayor Menino wins fourth term despite losing his tool box.



- ◆ The Darwin Project/Garden Under Glass slated for the Rose Kennedy Greenway, unable to find funding, will be replaced by "thin tower" residential buildings with exotic tropical plants in the lobbies.
- ◆ In an effort to avoid service cuts, the MBTA will replace the bus destination signs on the front of buses with changeable advertisements.
- ◆ Like John Cabot, who was Giovanni Caboto, Gov. Mitt Romney will discover his family name is actually "Romni," Italian heritage, allowing him to actually have a conversation with House and Senate leaders DiMasi and Travaligni.
- ◆ As part of its expansion program in Boston, Harvard University will buy the naming rights to the former Fleet Center.



**THE BOSTON INFORMER** Nov. 1994  
*Headlines for the Downtown, Midtown, North End, South End, South Boston and West End*

**"They Said It 10 Years Ago"**

"No one's contemplating raising tolls." Lt. Gov. Paul Cellucci on rumors MassPike tolls would go up to fund the Central Artery project.

"I am told that all mitigation programs are funded, environmental and non-environmental." Cathleen Douglas Stone, Boston's Chief of Environmental Services

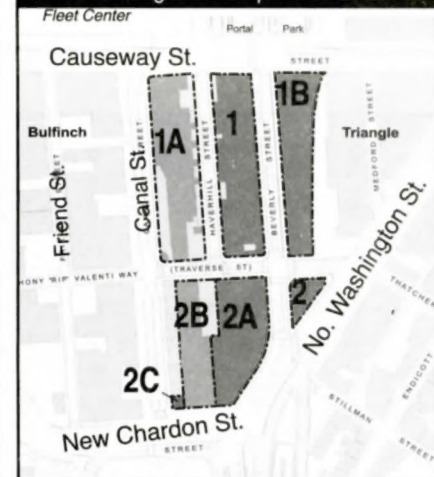
"If we had to pay off all businesses [severely affected by Central Artery construction] it could cost as much as the total cost of the project." Peter Zuk, Central Artery project director

## 1 Bulfinch Triangle Development

The MBTA and MassPike are seeking proposals for developers to restore the Bulfinch Triangle following removal of the Central Artery and Green Line elevated structures. The historic site includes seven developable parcels, five controlled by MassPike (parcels 1, 1B, 2, 2A, 2C) and two by the MBTA (parcels 1A and 2B).

The two agencies are issuing separate but coordinated requests for bids. Both call for residential, retail, restaurant, office and hotel uses within the context of 100-foot height limit, maximum floor-area ratio of 8.0 and 100 percent lot coverage. Development guidelines call for retail and restaurants on the ground floor. MBTA bids are due April 6, 2005, and MassPike bids will be accepted until May 3, 2005. The community will be able to review bids for both agencies' land at the same time. MBTA and MassPike are expected to select developers by mid-June.

### Bulfinch Triangle Development Parcel Plan



## 2 Silver Line Phase III

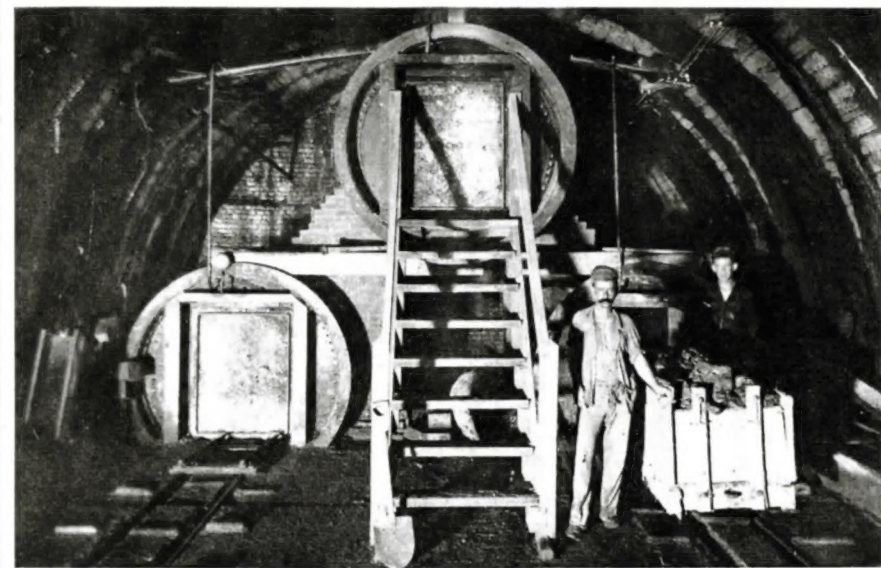
The MBTA's proposed Silver Line III bus rapid transit (BRT) project, originally conceived to connect the BRT running between Dudley and Downtown Crossing to the BRT at So. Station, now looks like a completely separate service. The MBTA is studying four Silver Line alternatives, including one that would start at Dudley, "tour the So. End" as one wag said, and run between Columbus Avenue and the So. Boston Waterfront via tunnel connecting to the Green Line at Boylston, Orange Line at Chinatown and Red Line at So. Station.

The estimated cost is \$780 million, and this does not include the cost of continuing some service on the existing route to Downtown Crossing (direct ride instead of Back Bay loop). Although the MBTA shaved \$193 million in construction costs in 2003 by eliminating a new station at N.E. Medical Center, the additional cost of tunneling from Columbus Avenue at Berkeley Street is likely to be more than small change. The Environmental Impact Report with benefits and impacts of the alternatives is expected in late spring.

The project was rated "recommended" by the Federal Transit Administration, the agency's middle rating, and will compete with over 15 other transit projects for a full funding grant agreement to build it.

## Blue Line Tunnel Celebrates 100th Anniversary!

The MBTA's Blue Line tunnel, the nation's first subaqueous transit tunnel, marked its 100th anniversary on December 30, 2004. Begun in 1900, the East Boston Tunnel ran streetcars initially between Court Street station and Maverick Square in East Boston. Then, the tunnel was extended to Scollay Square (Government Center) and Bowdoin Square in 1916. The new tun-



nel—an engineering marvel—cut travel time across the harbor to about seven minutes.

Service through the East Boston Tunnel soon began to evolve. First, streetcars from East Boston continued on to Cambridge via the Longfellow Bridge. In 1921, construction began on a new Maverick Square rapid transit station to allow conversion of streetcars in the East Boston Tunnel to rapid transit trains. Over a weekend in April 1924, the East Boston Tunnel was closed and changed from streetcar operation to rapid transit service using third rail. All surface streetcar lines that previously had run through the tunnel now went into the tunnel and terminated at a platform from which passengers could conveniently board the subway to Boston.

In 1952, the subway was extended from Maverick to Orient Heights, with service to Maverick using third rail and service beyond using overhead trolley wire. The service was extended to Revere in 1954.

Image and research courtesy State Transportation Library

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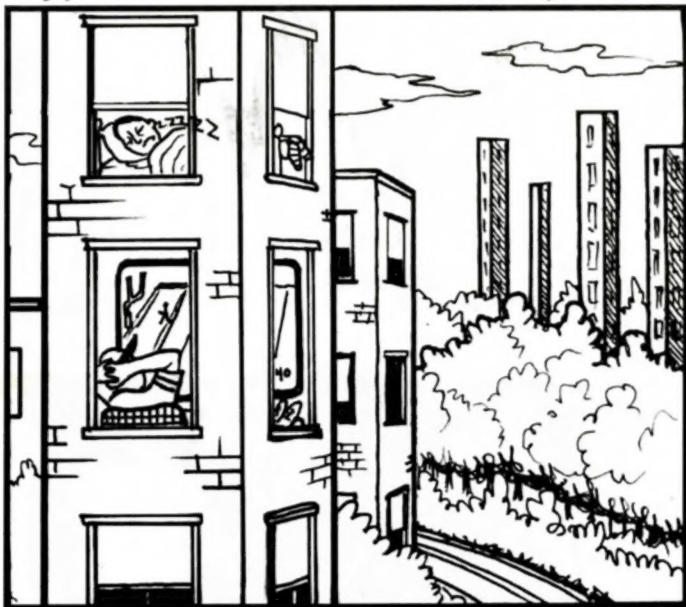
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### City pushes 'thin' towers on Rose Kennedy Greenway



**"24/7 life on the Rose Kennedy Greenway!"**

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## You Were Asking

**Q.** A 2004 report by Sandia National Laboratories for the U.S. Department of Energy states a terrorist attack on a liquefied natural gas (LNG) tanker such as those in the Boston Inner Harbor headed to the Everett terminal, could cause a catastrophe. Death, injuries and building damage from explosion and fire would ensue. What is being done to stop LNG tankers from coming into Boston?

**A.** In the short term, not much. However, off-shore terminals for LNG tankers at Providence or Fall River are being discussed. Further, a 2003 publication by retired MIT Professor James Fay suggested that oil and gasoline tankers are also a major hazard, although only modest security measures are in place.

**Q.** A representative of Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway Inc., the conservancy created to govern the Greenway, recently said that the Board of Directors and committee meetings would not be subject to the Commonwealth's "Open Meeting Law." Would they actually exclude the public from meetings?

**A.** That would not be in the spirit of the tripartite process (state/city/community) called for by MEPA.

**Q.** What's up with the Old Northern Avenue Bridge?

**A.** Boston Commissioner of Public Works Joseph Casazza assured The Boston Informer the City is still seeking funding for a major makeover for the bridge (see The Boston Informer July/August, 2004).

**Q.** I heard that former mayoral appointee Anthony Gordon was given no notice last year that he would not be re-appointed to the Back Bay Architectural Commission (BBAC). Didn't he vote against the Columbus Center project at the final 7-4 CAC vote? Aren't there a lot of expired commissioners and vacancies on this important City commission?

**A.** Yes and yes. It seems that no deed is forgotten and for some, City Hall works more slowly. All but two of the BBAC commissioners' five-year terms have expired and there are three vacancies.



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